

ED 334 849

FL 019 302

AUTHOR Weber, Ellen
TITLE Business German: The Use of Simulations in a Total Immersion German Business Class.
PUB DATE Apr 90
NOTE 10p.; Paper presented at the Eastern Michigan University Conference on Languages and Communications for World Business and the Professions (9th, Ypsilanti, MI, April 5-7, 1990).
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Business Administration Education; *Business Communication; Classroom Techniques; College Second Language Programs; Course Descriptions; *German; Higher Education; *Immersion Programs; *Languages for Special Purposes; Second Language Instruction; *Simulation
IDENTIFIERS *Concordia College at Moorhead MN

ABSTRACT

At Concordia College's Institute of German Studies (Minnesota), an immersion program, a 1-month course entitled "German in the Business World" concentrates on development of written and oral communication skills needed in firms dealing with German-speakers. As part of its emphasis on banking, insurance, and business, the course includes simulations of business situations 2 days a week and lectures the other 3 days. Students first decide on staff positions: business manager, secretary/bookkeeper, marketing and advertising experts, and office clerk. Subsequently, plans are made for firm location, name, partnership type, capital needs, products, price and delivery specifications, stationery and signs, and dates for mini-conferences to clear up problems. All employees must then submit an application and resume, have an interview, and sign contracts. Follow-up tasks include distributing profits, notices of resignation, letters of reference, and a farewell party. Students have used a number of business letter forms and designed a variety of products over the years. Students find the class both imparts theoretical information about banking, insurance, and business and requires its application in everyday business situations. (MSE)

* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *

517

ED334849

BUSINESS GERMAN:
THE USE OF SIMULATIONS IN A TOTAL IMMERSION
GERMAN BUSINESS CLASS

Ellen Weber
Institute Fur Deutsche Studien
Concordia Language Villages
Concordia College
9500 Ruppstrasse Northeast
Bemidji, Minnesota 56601

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS
MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Weber

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

- ☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
- ☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

* Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

FL019302

Introduction

Business German class can be challenging, interesting, and fun when a simulation approach to learning is used. I would like to tell you how I have applied this method of teaching Business German at the Institute of German Studies the past six years. I will discuss responsibilities of the employees, tasks of the students in setting up a company, writing business letters, products produced by some of the firms, and finally, advantages of the simulation approach. First, let me explain the unique setting where I teach.

Institute of German Studies

The Institute of German Studies in Bemidji, MN is a total-immersion program in German at the college level with the main campus of Concordia College in Moorhead, MN. Besides being able to earn a German major in one year, students gain a proficiency in German and an understanding of the people and their culture that normally would take years of study and travel to acquire. Students may spend a year or a semester at the Institute. A minimum of two years of high school German or two semesters of college German is required for admission. The two semester program is divided into eight octomesters, each one lasting one month. The student takes just one academic course a month taught by one professor, for three hours each day. Besides taking an academic class each month, students also are required to participate in the AG (work/study groups), taught by the native assistants, to

enhance the accurate usage of the language. In addition to the formal academic program, the Institute offers the students an opportunity for relaxation and recreation in culture courses.

There are around 50 students attending now and the "German in the Business World" course usually has 8 - 10 students. This course concentrates on the development of written and oral communication skills needed by personnel in firms dealing with German-speaking clientele. As part of its emphasis on banking, insurance and business, the course includes business simulations two days a week and lecture the other three days.

Employees: Positions and Responsibilities

To start a firm the first important task is to decide on the different positions for the students. The top position is the one of the business manager. He or she is responsible for running the business and also making sure that the co-workers have a good working relationship. The secretary/bookkeeper types the business letters and watches over the day to day problems, as well as the finances. The marketing and advertising experts do marketing research and motivate the customers to buy the products. They design advertisements and are responsible for putting together an effective advertisement show. The office clerk helps out in different

capacities.

Setting up the Company

When all these positions are decided on by the students, the following plans have to be made:

1. Where is the main office of the company located, will there be branches in different cities, countries.
2. The name and address of the firm.
3. What kind of a partnership will it be (stock corporation?)
4. How much basic capital is needed to start out, does the company have to take out a loan or sell stocks?
5. Which products will be sold, quantity and what kind of materials are needed .
6. Set price, cash discount, delivery, payment and warranty conditions.
7. The design of the letterhead and stationary, bookkeeping sheets, business sign and mail-box.
8. Dates for mini-conferences to clear up problems?

Following these decisions the business manager and each employee have to take the follwing steps:

They have to submit a letter of application and include a curriculum vitae. An interview by the businees manager follows. After that a contract with the working conditions must be signed by each employee.

521

Slide Show

To give you an idea how my students run their firms I have put together a slide show.

1. May I introduce the business manager and her employees of the Lamb Co. in Stuttgart.
2. It is time for the interview.
3. The marketing expert designs the business sign.
4. Everybody in the firm works hard. A sweatshirt with the Institute emblem on the front and the names of the students and the faculty on the back will be a good product to sell, a German/English receipe book and postcards from the Institute designed by the advertising expert will also be for sale.
5. The business manager makes an announcement about the products in the dining hall of the Institute and tries to motivate the customers to buy.
6. Working together and having fun is an important aspect of the business course.
7. Relaxation time for the manager of the company.....
It is not always easy to be in charge of a firm.
8. Everyone is happy, the sales are going well and Lamb company is ready to expand their business establishment.
9. "The customer is the king".....

538

And how is Tja International company in Bremen, Salzburg and Genf doing with their business?

1. Tja International Co., the business manager and employees.
2. Am I nervous? Of course, it is interview time ...
3. The advertising show - everyone needs a cup of coffee from Tja International, their slogan: "Du hast nicht alle Tassen im Schrank!" ("You don't have all the cups in your cupboard!") or the idiomatic phrase meaning "you are a bit crazy" that is why you should buy some from us.
4. The business manager dressed up like a coffee cup dances on the tables of the dining hall to motivate the clientele.
5. And here is the finished product - our coffee cups inscribed with favorite German slogans of the students like "Heilige Kuh" (Holy Cow), "Wunderbar!" (Wonderful!), "Immer Positiv!" (Always Positive!), and many more.....
6. Secretary Mr. Busse types a business letter for his firm- why did I accept this position???????????
7. A happy moment for Tja International company - they are on their way to becoming millionaires.
8. We did it! Smiling faces and lots of coffee cups

Follow up Tasks

Some tasks to follow up the closing of each firm are to go over the financial matters and distribute the profits among the students. There also has to be a written notice of resignation and the business manager writes a letter of reference for each of his employees. Then the two firms have a farewell party.

Writing Business Letters

Now I would like to talk about the different business letters in details. (I will have overheads of different business letters and will discuss them for about 5 min.).

Company Products

Next I will show you some of the different products that were designed by the students of the Institute of German Studies over the past years. (This will take another 5 - 8 min.).

Benefits of the Simulation Approach

Some people may ask why this business class is so important and what the students can learn by taking part in it. The answer comes from the Institute students themselves:

"We learn theoretical information about banking, insurance, and business and then can apply that knowledge in everyday

524

business situations. We gain practical experience in running a business which is helpful if we should decide to major in international business, be an entrepreneur, or work overseas. Another positive aspect is learning about ourselves and how we interact with others."

Conclusion

Using simulation in teaching business German can enhance learning, stimulate creativity, and provide variety in the classroom.

525

Biographical Sketch - Ellen Weber

- German Instructor for seven years at the Institute of German Studies in Bemidji, MN (Concordia College, Moorhead, MN).
- A native of Stuttgart, West-Germany.
- Acquired undergraduate degree in German, Vocal Music, and Business Education at Bemidji State University in Bemidji, MN.
- Graduate studies in German Literature and Linguistics at the University of North Dakota in Grand Forks, ND.
- She also has teaching experience with elementary, high school and adult community education.